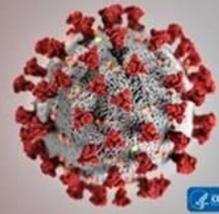


Update on COVID-19 and Kentucky Courts

Latest news from Supreme Court and Administrative Office of the Courts

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For Immediate Release

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Supreme Court announces pilot project to reduce eviction cases in Jefferson County

FRANKFORT, Ky., Aug. 11, 2020 — In an effort to mitigate the effects of homelessness and streamline eviction cases, the Supreme Court of Kentucky has established the Eviction Diversion Pilot Project in Jefferson District Court.

The project will connect tenants and landlords with rental assistance through Louisville Metro Government and other community organizations to help them avoid eviction for nonpayment of rent on residential properties. The pilot project will begin Aug. 24 and continue until further order of the Supreme Court.

“The Jefferson District Court judges appreciate the opportunity to pilot Kentucky’s first eviction diversion program,” Jefferson Chief District Judge Anne Haynie said. “We’re especially grateful to Deputy Chief Justice Lisabeth T. Hughes of the Supreme Court and Chief Judge Denise G. Clayton of the Court of Appeals for being the driving force behind this initiative. This program will benefit both parties by reimbursing eligible landlords for missed rent payments and keeping tenants in their homes, which is more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Under [Supreme Court Administrative Order 2020-59](#), an eviction summons in Jefferson County will be accompanied by written information about rent assistance. At the initial eviction hearing, the parties will also be informed verbally that certain local agencies may be able to assist tenants with funding for some or all of the rent owed and help landlords with recouping missed or late rent payments. Louisville Metro Government and the Legal Aid Society will have a representative present for each eviction hearing.

Eviction hearings will then be put on hold for seven days to give parties the opportunity to explore and apply for any available funding. If the parties reach an agreement on payment, the eviction proceedings will be dismissed.

“Even before COVID-19 hit, we were working with local partners to stop evictions and support our most financially vulnerable populations,” Louisville Metro Government Mayor Greg Fischer said. “This new program provides a critical last line of defense for those who need it the most, and will have an immediate and drastic impact on families and individuals throughout our city. I am very appreciative of this coordinated effort between the court system, Legal Aid and Louisville Metro Government, which creates a win-win scenario for all, as landlords receive payment and tenants are able to remain in their homes.”

The Legal Aid Society in Louisville provides free civil legal aid to eligible clients and is proud to be part of the Eviction Diversion Pilot Project, Executive Director Neva-Marie Polley Scott said. “As a result of the pandemic and unexpected loss of income, so many people in our community don’t have the ability to pay rent and are facing the prospect of eviction and homelessness. Having a roof over your head and a safe place to sleep at night are two of the most important elements of security. Community partners and Louisville Metro Government are working together to give tenants and landlords the opportunity to secure rental assistance. We believe all parties can craft solutions that will enhance the stability of not only the families facing eviction, but also the community as a whole.”

The Supreme Court is starting the Eviction Diversion Project in Jefferson County because funding was already available through Louisville Metro Government and several community agencies. The goal is to implement the eviction diversion program statewide once there are sufficient resources to fund the program in other counties.

Supreme Court of Kentucky

The [Supreme Court](#) is the state court of last resort and the final interpreter of Kentucky law. Seven justices sit on the Supreme Court and all seven rule on appeals that come before the court. The justices are elected from seven appellate districts and serve eight-year terms. A chief justice, chosen for a four-year term by fellow justices, is the administrative head of the state’s court system and is responsible for its operation. The Supreme Court may order a ruling or opinion to be published, which means that the ruling becomes the case law governing all similar cases in the future in Kentucky.

Administrative Office of the Courts

The [Administrative Office of the Courts](#) in Frankfort is the operations arm of the state court system. The AOC supports the activities of nearly 3,400 court system employees and 406 elected justices, judges and circuit court clerks. As the fiscal agent for the state court system, the AOC executes the Judicial Branch budget.

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